

# better child care



**VOLUNTARY HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF INDIA**

323  
18/7/92



Acknowledgements : Inputs provided by Dr. Shanti Ghosh; Miss. T. Padmasini Asuri, Nutrition Rehabilitation Centre; Govt. Hospital, Madurai; Community Health Project; Holy Family Hospital, New Delhi; and UNICEF for the second revised edition of 1991, has immensely helped in developing this new revised edition. We are also grateful to Dr. Salai Pa Cin for his help and guidance.

Text by : Padam Khanna & Dr. Sanjay Kapur

Photographs by : Sunil Mehra

© 1977, Voluntary Health Association of India  
All rights reserved

First published, 1977

Revised edition, 1989

Second revised edition 1991

Third revised edition, 1996

Page

Publ

Tong

40, I

New

Tele.

Fax :

India

***Community Health Cell***

Library and Documentation Unit

367, "Srinivasa Nilaya"

Jakkasandra 1st Main,

1st Block, Koramangala,

BANGALORE-560 034.

Phone : 5531518





## WHO IS THIS BOOKLET FOR?

For all those who are interested in care of children.

---

Especially those who teach parents and relatives.

---

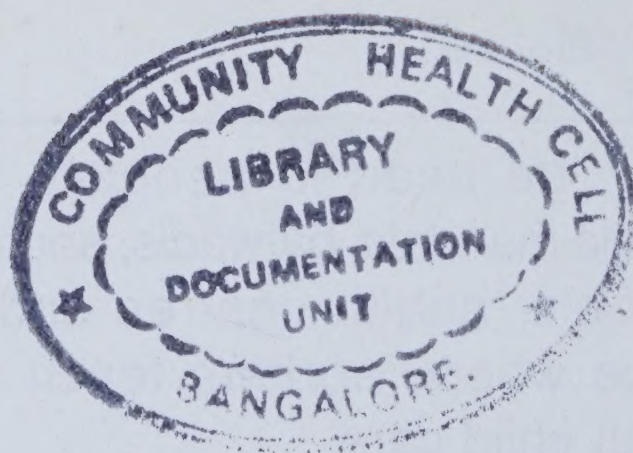
Can be used in people's homes, mahila mandals, balwadis, anganwadis, schools, health centres and in any place where workers teach parents about child care.

**NOTE:** In this booklet the word "health worker" is used to indicate all those people trained to give health care and health education.



TM-110 N96

05206







## WHAT DOES GOOD CARE MEAN?

**A** healthy child is a happy child.  
Child who is given enough food  
and looked after properly, will be healthy.





**G**ood care begins even before a child is born.

Every pregnant woman wants a healthy child. She should eat extra food. This will help her and the baby growing within her to grow healthy.

Pregnant mothers should take more food than what they were taking before pregnancy. They should specially eat more roti, rice, more dals and green leafy vegetables. She should also take milk or curd regularly. All pregnant mothers should also take iron and folic acid tablets regularly as advised by the health worker.



## **D**URING PREGNANCY, A WOMAN SHOULD BE EXAMINED AT LEAST 3 TIMES BY A TRAINED PERSON.

Firstly, the health worker takes a detailed history of her present and previous pregnancies

**Then, the health worker examines :**

- ☐ Her abdomen to check the position and size of the baby
- ☐ Her eyes to check if there is anaemia
- ☐ Her feet to check if there is any swelling
- ☐ Her weight and blood pressure

The health worker shares ideas on how to eat good food and how to take rest as often as she can, and gives advice about parenthood and family planning. The health worker also gives her immunisation against tetanus.

If she has any problem, she should see the health worker more often.



# **T**HE HEALTH WORKER WILL ASK A PREGNANT MOTHER TO HAVE THE FOLLOWING TESTS DONE:

## **URINE TEST:**

To check level of proteins and sugar

## **BLOOD TEST:**

a. To check the haemoglobin to find out anaemia

b. To find the blood group ( this is especially necessary for the pregnant woman under risk)

## **The health worker checks the warning signals:**

- Headache
- Blurring of vision
- Swelling of feet
- Bleeding from vagina
- Convulsions
- The health informs the pregnant woman to always look for these signals and seek medical help.



**T**HE HEALTH WORKER LOOKS FOR THE FACTORS WHICH COULD ENDANGER THE LIFE OF THE MOTHER, OR CHILD OR BOTH. THE FACTORS ARE:

a. The pregnant woman being very young (less than 18 years of age) or very elderly (more than 35 years of age)

b. Weight less than 40 k.g

c. Height less than 140cms

d. Having severe anaemia

e. If number of previous pregnancies is more than four

f. Bleeding during the earlier pregnancies

g. Baby in abnormal position in the womb

h. Presence of warning signals e.g. Convulsions, blurring of vision etc

If such factors are present, the health worker will refer the pregnant mother to the nearest Primary Health Centre for necessary care and follow up.

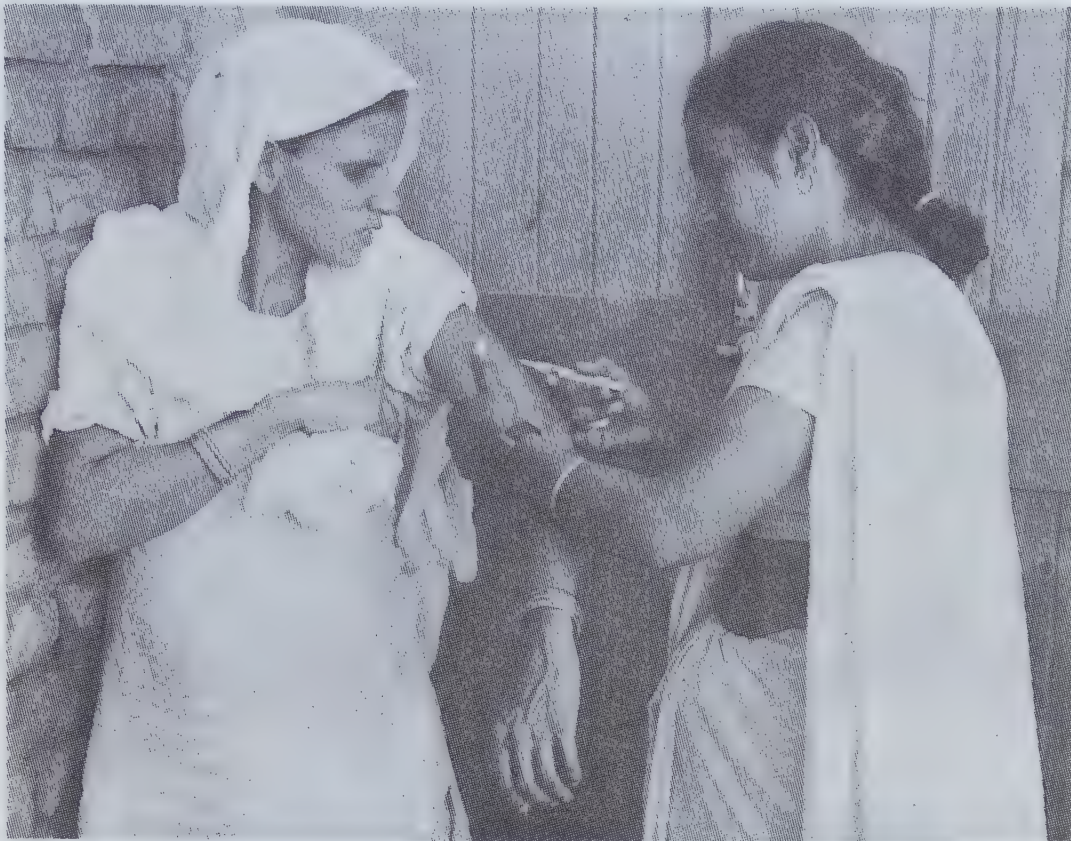




**S**ometimes a pregnant woman may have pale lips and pale tongue. She may also feel more tired than usual. This is because her blood is not as healthy as it should be. It can make her delivery difficult. Her baby may also be small and weak.

She should take extra care of her diet. She needs to take extra amount of green leafy vegetables, gur, banana etc. as well as iron and folic acid tablets. She should also consult the health worker regularly.





**S**ometimes newborn babies die of tetanus. This happens if the person delivering the baby has dirty hands or if a dirty knife or blade is used to cut the cord.

A pregnant woman should protect her baby and herself from tetanus. She can do this by getting two injections of tetanus toxoid (TT) from the health worker during her pregnancy. The first injection should be taken at the time of first contact with the health worker or as early as possible. The second injection should be taken 4-6 weeks after the first injection, but definitely one month before the due delivery date. In later pregnancies, only single dose may be required if time gap between previous and present pregnancy is less than 3 years.





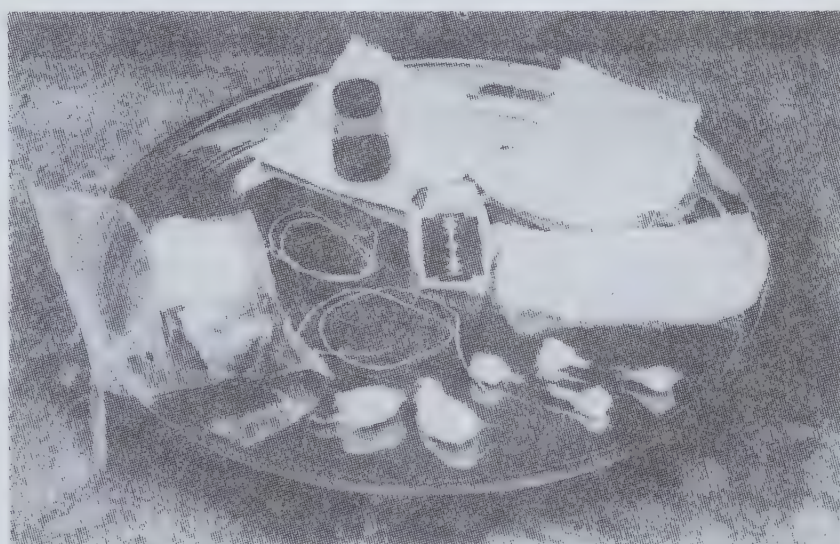
**All deliveries should be conducted by a trained health worker or dai.**

**T**he place where the baby is to be born should be clean, have enough light and fresh air. The pregnant woman should have a clean cloth to lie on. The person doing the delivery should wash her hands with soap and water before conducting the delivery



## **T**O PERFORM SAFE HOME DELIVERY, A TRAINED PERSON MUST USE:

- ☐ New, clean razor blade for cutting the cord
- ☐ New, clean pieces of string for tying the cord
- ☐ Clean Cotton / I gauze
- ☐ Gentian violet / mercurochrome



The cotton gauze and the pieces of string should be boiled for 20-30 minutes before using them. This will prevent the infection of the cut cord.





**I**f a new blade is not available, a clean knife can be used to cut the cord. She should hold the knife in the fire until it becomes red. Then cool the knife in the air and use it to cut the cord.

Keep the baby's cord clean and dry. It is good to apply some gentian violet on the cord. Do not apply anything else on the cord.

**If the cord looks red, bleeds or smells, take the baby to the health centre. Your baby needs special care. The baby may have infection of the cord.**

Early identification of pregnant mother

Regular check up / care during pregnancy

Safe home delivery conducted by a trained child.

Will give us a healthy mother with a healthy child





The mother should start breast feeding the baby immediately after birth. If she does this, her milk will come quicker.

**F**or the first two or three days, a yellowish, sticky fluid comes out of the breast. This is called **colostrum**.

Colostrum must be given to all newborn babies. It is very useful. It makes the baby grow and build up strength. It will protect the baby from several diseases.



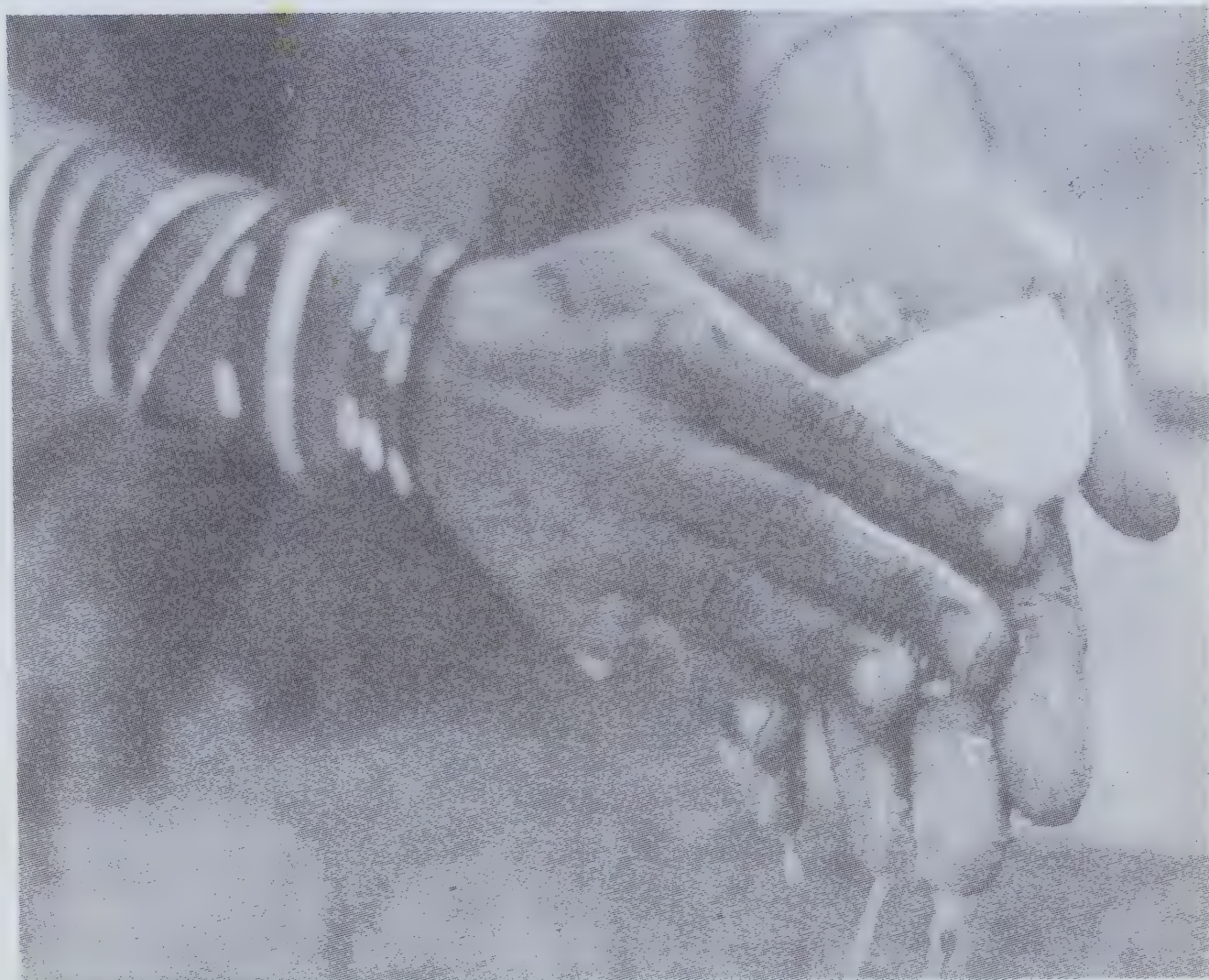


**Breast milk is the best food for the growth of a baby.**

**F**or the first 4-5 months the baby should be exclusively given breast feed only. There is no need even to give water to the baby because, the water requirement is met from the Breast milk.

The baby may loose a little weight in the first week. This is quite normal. Breast feed the baby as often as she demands. The baby will start to gain weight.





**T**he mother should clean her breast and wash her hands before feeding the child.

**Clean breasts stop dirt from getting into baby's mouth. This way baby does not get sick.**

**Clean breasts do not get sore and painful. This helps mother to breast feed easily.**





**A**fter her baby's birth, a mother must continue to eat extra food. She needs this to produce enough milk for the growth of her baby as well as for her own health also.

She should eat more of the food she usually eats. Green leafy vegetables, dals, wheat, milk, rice, groundnut, soyabean etc. are specially good for the mother

**Breast feeding should be continued as long as the mother is producing the milk.**



**T**HE MOTHER AND HER BABY SHOULD GO TO THE HEALTH CENTRE OR THE NEAREST ANGANWADI REGULARLY. THERE THE HEALTH WORKER WILL SEE WHETHER THE MOTHER AND HER BABY ARE HEALTHY.

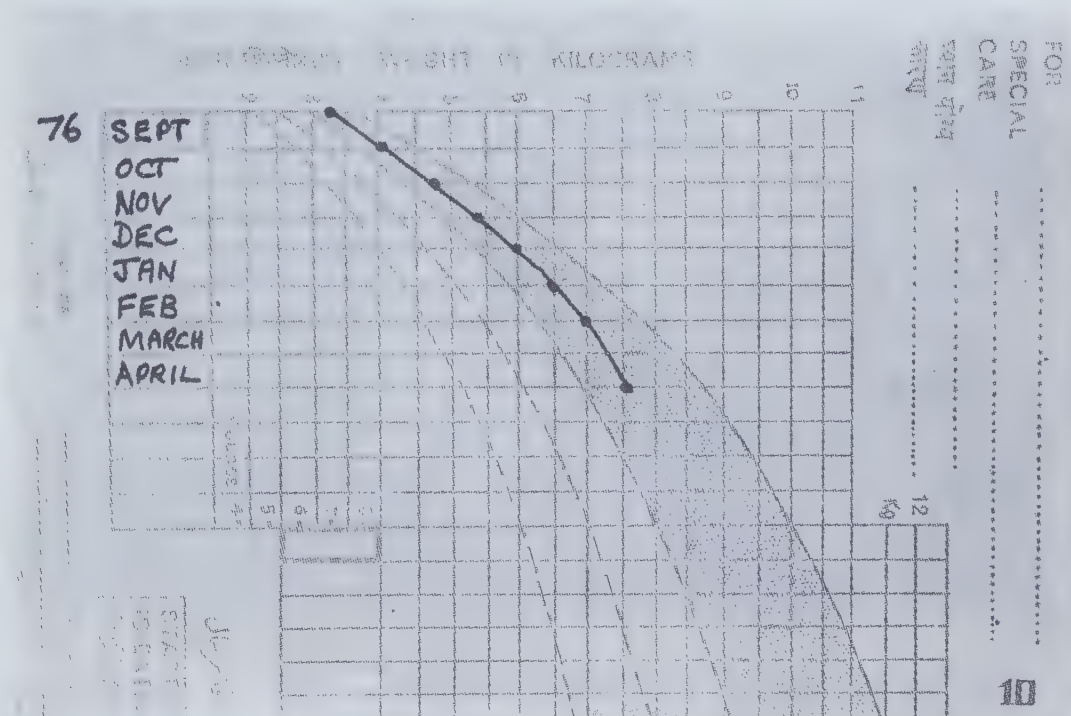
She will take the weight of the baby to see whether the child is growing normally. The weight of an average healthy baby should be:

At birth : at least 2.5 kg.

By six month: double of the weight at birth.

One year: three times of the weight at birth.

Two years: Four times of the weight at birth.



A child's weight should keep increasing. A health worker often uses a road to health card (fig.) to see if the child's weight is increasing normally or not.

Take your child to the health centre regularly. It will help you see your child growing properly and healthy.





**T**he health worker will also tell the mother how she can prevent herself from getting pregnant again. A mother with a little baby needs to be healthy to look after her baby. If she gets pregnant again within a short time her health will suffer as well as the child.





**C**hildren get ill more often than adults. There are many childhood diseases which make small children very weak. Sometimes they can even cripple a child forever, or cause death. These diseases are, tuberculosis (T.B), measles, diptheria, pertussis (whooping cough) tetanus and polio.

You can protect your child from these diseases through immunisation injections. The chart given on the next page will help to know when these injections should be given.



## IMMUNIZATION SCHEDULE

- |            |        |  |
|------------|--------|--|
| 1. BCG     | 1 dose | at birth or as early as possible   |
| 2. DPT     | }      | 3 doses<br>at monthly<br>intervals<br><br>1st dose : 6 weeks of age<br>2nd dose : 4-6 weeks after<br>first dose<br>3rd dose : 4-6 weeks after<br>second dose |
| 3. OPV     |        |  |
| 4. Measles |        |  |

### First booster dose

- |        |       |   |
|--------|-------|---|
| 1. DPT | 1dose | 1 year after third dose of DPT and OPV. |
| 2. OPV | 1dose |   |

### Second booster dose

- |       |        |                                     |
|-------|--------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. DT | 1 dose | at 5 years of age<br>(school entry) |
|-------|--------|-------------------------------------|

**Therefore, all children should receive 1 dose of BCG, 3 doses of DPT and OPV and 1 dose of measles vaccination before their first birthday.**

Minor cough, cold, fevers and other minor illness in the child is NOT a reason to stop immunisation.





**B**reast milk alone is sufficient for growth of baby till 4-5 months of age. After four months, breast milk alone is not enough for the growth and development of the baby. To grow well she needs other foods like mashed potatoes, rice, dal, khichri, mashed bananas etc. In the beginning, the child may not like the taste of new food. Introduce a new type of food every week. A mother should also continue to breast feed her baby. A baby needs his mother's milk even after the child begins to eat other foods.

**A mother should always clean the breast and wash her hands before feeding her child.**





**W**hen the baby begins to eat well, other foods like beans, dals, peas, egg and vegetables should be added gradually. These foods must be chopped or made softer and smaller and cooked well. Always add a spoon of oil or ghee. It gives more energy and makes the taste better. Fresh seasonal fruits should also be given to the child.



**A** baby has a small stomach. He cannot eat a lot of food at one time. So a mother should feed her baby many times a day. By six months a child should eat five or six times a day.

A one year old child needs lots of food to grow properly. He now needs half as much food as his mother needs. Even now the child should be fed 5-6 times a day. The child can be given the food which is normally cooked for the other members of the family. There is no need to cook specially for the child.





As the child grows, she achieves different milestones at different times. These milestones indicate proper mental and social development.

## **MILESTONES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CHILD**

6-8 WEEKS : Looks at mother and smiles

3 MONTHS : Holds head straight

4-5 MONTHS : Recognises mother, listens, begins to reach out for objects

6-8 MONTHS : Sits without support, enjoys hide and seek, transfer objects from one hand to the other, experiments with noises

9-10 MONTHS : Starts crawling, makes more different kind of noises, suspicious of strangers

10-11 MONTHS : Stands with support, speak first words

12-14 MONTHS : Starts Walking

18-21 MONTHS : Develops walking and begins to run, joins words together, begins to explore

24 MONTHS : Runs, speaks short sentences, stops wetting clothes during the day



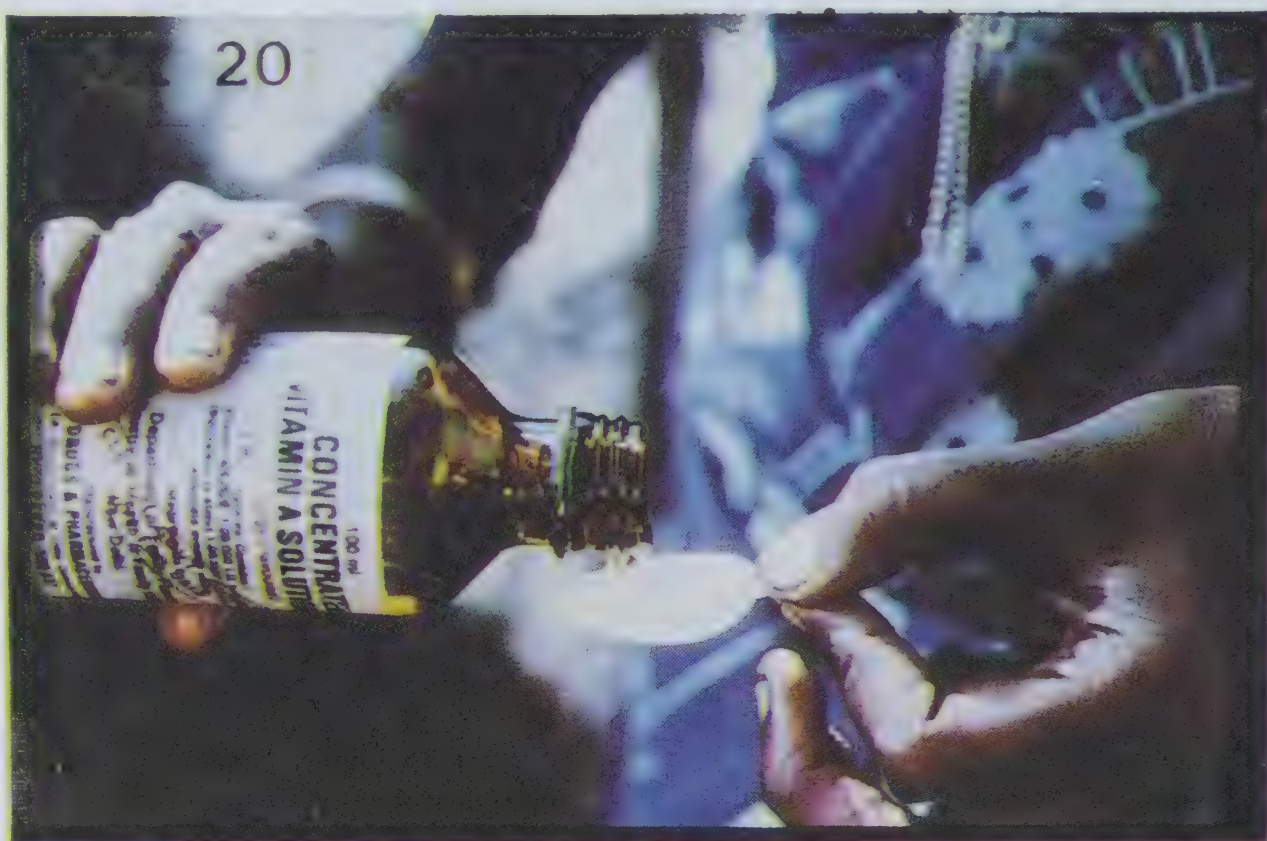


**D**ust, flies and dirty hands make food dirty.  
Dirty foods make children sick.

A mother should wash her hands before she prepares food for her child. She should also wash her hands before feeding the child. She should wash the cup and spoon with clean water before feeding the child.

She should store the food and water in a clean container. The food should be kept covered to protect it from dust and flies.





**T**housands of children in our country become blind due to deficiency of vitamin A in their diet. This deficiency leads to difficulty to see in darkness (*called night blindness*) which can cause total blindness. All children should be given plenty of foods rich in vitamin A, e.g. green leafy vegetables, carrots, yellow fruits like mangoes, papaya etc. vitamin A is also available free of cost at primary health centres and sub centres. All children should be given vitamin A at regular intervals.





**A**ll growing children require proper diet for their growth and development. They must be given plenty of foods rich in proteins (*e.g. pulses, groundnuts, wheat, rice, soyabean and if affordable meat, fish etc.*) children whose diet is insufficient, they tend to become malnourished and are prone to various types of diseases.

If a child looks weak and pale, she may be having anemia (*i.e. less haemoglobin in blood*). A health worker can detect this by looking at the child's eyes, nails and hands etc. If these look pale, the child may have anemia. A pale and weak child needs to be given plenty of green leafy vegetables, banana, cereals and if possible egg & meat. She also should be given iron tablets. Her stools should also be checked for any worms. This will make her grow healthier and stronger.



**Y**oung children are prone to diarrhoea. When a child gets diarrhoea, she starts losing water and other chemicals substances from the body. This is called dehydration. Very young children are prone to developing dehydration very fast. It can be fatal to the child. If a child gets diarrhoea, do not panic. Dehydration which makes the child serious can be easily prevented/treated by replacing the body fluids. Therefore, it is vital to start replacing the fluids of the child at the earliest. Remember, majority of diarrhoeas in children can be treated by oral rehydration solution. There is no need to give medicines in most of the cases of diarrhoeas in children.

The easiest way to replace body fluids is by given the child home made fluids like sugar salt solution, rice water, dal water, weak tea, etc. If these aren't available at home, plain water can also be given.

Breast feeding should be continued during diarrhoea. Normal feeding during diarrhoea should also be continued.

If a child :

- is not passing enough urine
- is not in its proper senses
- has excessive vomiting
- is not getting better with home made solutions

Then the child should be **immediatey** taken to the nearest medical facility.





**I**f your child is breathing very fast, she is refusing to take feeds, is restless and develops high fever, she may be suffering from pneumonia. You should take her to the nearest PHC immediately because delay in treatment can be dangerous.





**F**ever is a very common complaint in young children. High fever in children can lead to convulsions and unconsciousness, but do not panic. Whenever your child has high fever, you should do cold sponging of the entire body. During winters, you can use tap / handpump water. Putting on the fan will also help to bring the temperature down.

Continue breast feeding and also give the child plenty of fluids.



## **S**ome points to remember for better child care

1. Exclusive breast feeding should continue till 4-5 months of age
2. Supplement breast feeding with semisolid foods from 4-5 months onwards
3. Continue breast feeding during and after illness, particularly during diarrhoeas and fever
4. Protect your child from six vaccine preventable diseases by proper immunisation
5. Keep your surroundings clean. Wash your hands before feeding the child and after cleaning the child
6. Take your child regularly to the nearest Anganwadi to monitor her growth
7. Continue giving extra fluids during diarrhoea and fever
8. Ensure safe drinking water to the child
9. Shower your child with love and care in addition to adequate food and clean surroundings
10. A healthy child (boy or girl) is an asset to the family







The Child to Child Primary Health Readers have been developed to teach and encourage primary school children in India to become aware of their health problems. These are also meant to create concern about the health of their younger brothers and sisters. Each book has been written by an experienced educationalist in conjunction with a panel of medical and language specialists.

The Readers can be used as an integral part of primary school education in Science, Social Studies and Environmental Studies.

**A Toothy Story** : A reader on dental care that tells children how to avoid cavities through good dental hygiene and proper diet.

**Watch Out** : Accidents don't have to happen- but Aman and his family find out the hard way.

**Clever Saroja** : We can all get diarrhoea or fever at any time. Saroja shows us what to do.

**The Food Fair** : The local school is holding its annual fair. Shanti's group wants to win the prize. How do they do it ?

**Attack** : Did you know that everyday we are attacked by little creatures called worms and germs ? How do we defend ourselves from them ?

*Child to Child activities are included in every book.*

Price : Rs. 100/- Per Set of 5 books

(available in Hindi and English)

(Packing & Postage extra, Rs. 20/- Per Set)



## Rules for **BETTER CHILD CARE**

- ★ Breast feed your child for as long as possible.
- ★ Start to feed your young child soft food when she is four months old.
- ★ Continue to feed your child when she is ill.
- ★ Give your child extra water when she is ill, especially if she has diarrhoea.
- ★ When your child is ill, seek help from the nearest health centre.
- ★ Get your child immunized.
- ★ Keep flies off food.
- ★ Wash your own hands and your child's hands before feeding her.
- ★ Give your child clean water to drink.
- ★ Have only two or three children.
- ★ Make sure there is two to three years space between each child.



**Voluntary Health Association of India**  
**Tong Swasthya Bhawan**  
**40, Institutional Area**  
**New Delhi - 110 016**  
**Tele. : 6518071, 6518072, 6515018, 6962953**  
**Fax : 011-6853708**